

The Never ending story

One of the surprise movie hits of last year was *The NeverEnding Story* yet it should not have surprised anyone since it contains all those magical ingredients that captivate the imaginations and emotions of children. And it is Wolfgang Petersen, the 46 year old German director who gave us the brilliant Academy Award winning film, *Das Boot* (*The Boat*), who made this wonderful science fiction fantasy.

The NeverEnding Story is in essence a children's story yet it draws all age groups under its spell. It tells of a ten year old boy, Bastian who, unlike other children at his school, loves reading books. One day he steals — he would say borrows — an old book from his local book store called *The NeverEnding Story* which he reads in his school's attic. So enthralling is the story, he can't put it down and soon he finds himself being drawn into the tale and becomes an integral part of it all.

The book tells of an imaginary place called Fantasia, somewhere over the rainbow near Oz, one is led to believe. But Fantasia is facing extinction by The Nothing, a force created by human disbelief. A young warrior is 'the only person who can save Fantasia, or so it seems until the warrior, in his quest, learns that his mission is to draw the young reader, Bastian into the story and it is he who must become the saviour.

The story is told with the assistance of some brilliant special effects created by Brian Johnson who has won Academy Awards for his work in 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, *Alien* and *The Empire Strikes Back*. Johnson's special effects make up supervisor was Colin Arthur who worked on *Alien*, 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, *Conan The Barbarian*, *Diamonds Are Forever*, *Christiane F* and *Clash of the Titans* to name but a few.

Together they have created some of the most original creatures rivalling the array of odd-ball characters in the *Star Wars* films for originality. The effects together with the action-filled story make this a wonderful example of light film entertainment with universal appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds. Rated G.

